

Interviewee: Mary Ikeda and Marie Ikeda
Interviewer: Hiroshi Yamamoto and Natalie
Date: January 18, 2010
Location: Toronto, ON
Accession Number: 2010-025

*Note that this interview contains outdated terminology to describe Asian items.

[Start Interview]

Unknown: [unclear]

Marie Ikeda: Okay.

[laughter from someone off-screen]

Marie: Yeah, okay.

[multiple people speaking – unclear] [laughter]

Mary Ikeda: I don't know the answers to all these questions.

Peter Wakayama: Yeah, you don't need that paper. [takes paper Mary is holding]

Peter Wakayama: You don't need that paper, just answer, just answer, 'cause then you're always looking down.

Natalie: Sure. And if there's a question that nothing comes to mind now, we can leave it and just go on-

Marie: Okay.

Natalie: And you can always say, "Hey, I wanted to talk about-" Later we can always go back. There's no pressure. So. Okay. So, could you please tell me about what you know of the history of sumi-e in Canada? Like when and where did it start?

Marie: Well, I think- You want me to answer first?

Natalie: Sure.

Marie: I think, well, Ruth Yamada learned from Marjorie Piggott, and I believe she came before the war started, or after the war started? [looks at Mary].

Mary: Might be after.

Marie: After the war started. She came to East Toronto, and Ruth Yamada took lessons from her. And then when the Cultural Centre opened in '63, the then-Executive Director was Bob Kadoguchi, his wife was teaching ikenobo ikebana, so then he asked Ruth if she would do sumi-e. And in the early days, like when she started, she was here three- like two nights, and one, like, Wednesday afternoon. So, then we- my sister-in-law and I [points to Mary], we took lessons from Ruth Yamada at the Cultural Centre.

Hiroshi Yamamoto: [unclear]

Marie: Huh?

HY: [When was that?]

Marie: It was 1967.

HY: 1960-

Marie: [nodding] Yeah, so we saw it at the Spring Festival, or some sort of festival. And I

thought, “Oh, that looks like fun, I’d like to try it.” [laughs] And then so did Mary, so we both decided to go.

Natalie: What aspect of it appealed to you?

Marie: For me it was the spontaneity.

Mary: We thought it looked easy, [laughing] until we tried it.

Marie: [laughs] Yeah, yeah. And I thought, “I could do that,” but then it took a few years to master the rest of- because Ruth Yamada taught the one brush method. So, we always had the medium-sized brush. And we learned all the different strokes, narrow strokes to wide ones, but the one brush.

Mary: And she taught what the Japanese teachers taught. You- you learned by observing, there wasn’t any of that- In the later years, I used to try to help a student by holding their hands, even- [holds hand up like she is holding a brush]

Marie: Well-

Mary: She just [makes faster motions with her hand] and I hadn’t painted—you don’t catch it, too bad. [laughing]

Marie: I mean, you were always amazed at all this beautiful painting, that was just ‘*swish, swish, swish,*’ then it was done. [chuckling] So, I really enjoyed her painting.

Natalie: Could you tell us a little bit about who taught Ruth Yamada, as well?

Marie: Oh, [looking to Mary] do you remember that?

Mary: Well, I’ve got a sort of a little thing here. [looking down at paper] A history about Ruth. She was born in 1921 in Vancouver. And she studied Japanese-style painting with Marjorie Piggott in Toronto, and the traditional [nanga?] sumi-e style under Kohaku Kawabata in Japan. And at the Ontario College of Art, she took up watercolour, and later in life she realized her dreams to receive the Bachelor of Arts at U of T [University of Toronto]. And she’s received many awards since then, and she’s a member of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour, the Satsuki Kai of Kyoto, the Nippon [naga?] Society of Japan, and the Sumi-e Society of America. She was a founding member of the Sumi-e Artists of Canada and was in the Canadian Who’s Who. Her work is included in numerous public and corporate collections, one of them the Queen’s Collection, Windsor Castle, England; the Consulate of Japan in Toronto, IBM [International Business Machines] Canada; Art of Canada; Sumi-e [?] Canada; Trent University, Peterborough. She was married to Sam Yamada, [turns to Marie] do you know when she got married? Was it before the war or right after the war?

[00:05]

Marie: No, it must have been- well Sam was here- I don’t know exactly when, but, say, Mark must be in his 50s, so she would be about 70, so that would make her about 1940- something or 50, I guess, that she got married.

Mary: [nodding] Anyways, she was a wonderful teacher.

Marie: Mm-hm. And we were lucky, that was before photo stacks, so she would give us all

an original painting. Done on newsprint, mind you, but it was still an original one. So, you could see-

Mary: Yeah, there were 20 students. And she had 20 originals, and she handed one to each of them-

Marie: Yeah, well that was just the beginners, but then she had intermediate, and the advanced, and about three different extension courses. But- so we were lucky. Because, you know, there's nothing like the originals, then you can see which strokes came first up you know, [unclear]-

Mary: And just at the end the machines came in, and we started receiving these black and white copies.

Marie: [laughing] Yeah. So, I still have some of those originals, you know, the newsprint. They're sort of breaking apart, but anyways, yeah. But as far as Marjorie Piggott, I guess would be the founding member of the sumi-e art. In Toronto, anyways.

HY: Did you meet Marjorie Piggott?

Marie: Yes, yeah, yeah, we met. And then, well, she was our honorary member when the sumi-e- like, we were a chapter of the sumi-e artists of- no, Sumi-e Society of America, as the Ontario chapter of that society. And so, Marjorie Piggott came to our first two or three shows in the beginning.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: So, it was a real thrill to meet her.

Natalie: Did Ruth talk about her? Do you remember stories?

Marie: Yes, she was very close to her, so- I regret now, because she had said that she could get us paintings from Marjorie Piggott [Marie and Mary both laugh] but at that time, I don't know, busy or something, I never thought anything of it, but she would have negotiated a price for us with one of her paintings, because-

Mary: [To Marie, laughing] Well, I don't know about you, but I didn't have the funds to buy paintings.

Marie: Yeah, well I guess I didn't either, with the children and everything, but- yeah. But it was, you know, I'm sure I could have afforded- because in those days you bought it for maybe 100 or 200 dollars, I don't know.

Mary: Yeah. Not 2000. [laughing]

Marie: No, because just before she died, she had a show at the- what's that gallery just south of Bloor Street on Yonge? It's a well-known gallery-

HY: Ah, yes. There's the one gallery that- [unclear]

Marie: Yeah, no, she had a, like, a show there. And I know that a lot of them are \$5000. And that's, what- about 20-odd years ago.

HY: So, she was [unclear] as a kind of famous artist?

Marie: Yes, yes-

Mary: Yes, she became famous. In fact, when she first came to Toronto, she had a showing and- in her own little coach house, I think that's where she lived, and nobody came, she couldn't sell anything, but just before the end of the evening, this lady came up, and she was

from the *Globe and Mail*. And she loved what she saw. And so, she wrote up about it in the papers. And I think that's where her fame took off. Yeah.

Marie: Yeah because I've heard several people say [they think of?] Marjorie Piggott paintings, you know, like when they come to see our sumi-e show.

HY: When did she pass away?

Marie: Oh gosh. Well, she must have been- I'm sure she must have lived to about 1990.

HY: 1990s?

Marie: '90-something. The '90s, I think.

Mary: Well, in 1990, the Sumi-e Artists of Canada had the 10th anniversary show, she was gone by then.

Marie: She was gone by then.

Mary: [unclear]

Marie: I don't know how old she was when the Sumi-e Artists- the society- that first show was it '81? '81 or '82.

[00:10]

Marie: So, at that time, she was- she was quite elderly.

Mary: Yeah, 1980, yeah. That's right, 'cause I only saw her once or twice. When we saw her [unclear].

Marie: [unclear] because, apparently, she liked sushi, so she would order sushi from the Prince of Wales [?] [unclear]. And then she would send a little thank you note with her painting on it, [laughs] like a little card, but- So I remember the maître d' saying [?] [unclear]. [laughing]

Mary: I think Marjorie loved flowers, because one of my friends' husbands, his mother owned a flower shop near where she lived, and I don't know where it was, but she used to thank her for the flowers, and then one day she gave her a painting, and she said there was even a painting on the back of it. [Marie and Mary both laugh] So she framed the side that she liked.

Marie: But her sister was, like, a- the business manager for her-

Mary: Was it Edith?

Marie: Maybe that's it, Edith, yeah. So, Marjorie, she was the painter, like, artist, and her sister was the businesswoman.

Mary: [looking at notes] I've got a sort of an interesting thing about Mrs. Yamada in this write up. It was in the paper. She was born in Vancouver, and to avoid internment during World War II, she moved to London, Ontario to work as a senator's maid. Now, Mrs. Yamada - Ruth's mother had spent her early years in Canada, working as a cook in a lumber camp, and knew an internment camp was not safe for a teenage girl, so she used her Anglican church connections to send her daughter east while the family was forced to harvest sugar beets in the BC interior. And Teri Yamada said her mother didn't fare much better with the senator. She said his wife was very cruel, and her mother remembers having to sneak meals from the kitchen because they wouldn't feed her, and there were

[unclear] saying they couldn't deal with her because she was Japanese, and when the war ended, the senator refused to pay Mrs. Yamada her back wages, which I thought was terrible. And determined never to be in a position of dependence again, Ruth went to Toronto in search of a new job. She had a portfolio, and she talked her way into a job as an advertising artist at Camp Fairweather, which [looks to Marie] must be the Fairweather Company we heard about, eh? And by 1949 she was the advertising manager, and she quit a year later, which was 1950, when her first child was born, but continued to work in her husband's photo studio. And Sam Yamada had a photo studio and it was very popular with the Japanese Canadian-

Marie: And, oh, because before they used to show pictures of brides in *The Star*, and there'd be about half a dozen photos, and a lot of them are Sam Yamada, so it wasn't just Japanese, you know, but then-

Mary: You had yours taken.

Marie: Yeah. Didn't you?

Mary: No, [laughing]-

Marie: Yeah, I-

Mary: I had both of my children's taken when they reached one years of age.

Marie: Yeah, but then, you know, it wasn't something that Sam said, but because there was such a discrimination against Japanese, she dropped the 'O' from her name, Hagino, [referring to Ruth Yamada's maiden name] and just went as Hagin. You know, at that time-

Mary: I didn't hear that part.

Marie: And also, there was an article about her in *The Star*, and Sam had this- like a photo album of all the Japanese people that he had taken, you know, so there were quite a few. And then he also had a newspaper clipping, because it was about Ruth, like, it was, being I guess manager or whatever. And he said, "You know, when she had to drop the name, like, you know, the 'O,' and she was named 'Hagin'". [laughs]

Mary: So, when she adds in the 'O,' nobody knew what she was. [both laughing] Yeah, it was hard when we came to Toronto, you know, I was young enough that I always had to interpret for my mother when she was shopping.

[00:15]

Mary: And it was pretty bad when the salespeople, say at Eaton's, or somewhere, they would just turn their backs on us. You couldn't purchase anything, or they were rather rude when they finally did see you. But that sort of died down after a while-

Marie: Well, me myself never really felt any- no-

Mary: I did. My dad-

Marie: Maybe it just went over my head, I don't know-

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: But I just never felt-

Mary: My dad wanted to start a business at one time if he could, or- No, we had to buy a house, my mother said, so we went to look up at St. Clair, Davenport, you know, around

Bathurst, Oakwood areas, and every time he got to the door of a place, they said it was already gone. You know, they didn't want to sell to Japanese. So, we finally got a home on Burnside, and just a few doors away from Bathurst, north of Davenport. It was a beautiful home, and it was owned by a Jewish doctor, and he, when he heard that my brother was in-going into medicine, he got really interested in my mom and dad. He sold them the house. And his name was Dr. Irwin [?]. [looking at Marie, laughing] But that hasn't anything to do with sumi-e- [laughter]

HY: But that is one part of the Japanese Canadian history-

Mary: Yeah, yes, yeah.

Natalie: Did people hear much about Marjorie Piggott's training. You know-

Mary: Well, she learned in Japan.

Marie: Oh, yeah, because she was born and raised in Japan.

Mary: Yeah, Japan, yeah.

Marie: I think she was in her- like, I don't know, when her mother married this-

HY: She was born in Yokohama, yeah?

Marie: Yeah, I think something, yeah, but-

Mary: Her mother was not a farmer or anything, she was very well-off, and he was a British businessman. And he- I think when they got married and had a family, the girls were all taught- the Japanese arts, you know, tea ceremony, and painting, and what-have-you, and I think Marjorie took to painting.

Marie: Well, because the different- like, Ruth's style, I can see from Marjorie's style, too, from Marjorie's style.

Mary: Her name, Marjorie Piggott, they gave her a name called aki-no-kudo [?]. Is it because Piggott is- the Japanese way of pronouncing Piggott was 'Pi-go-to'. So, 'go-to' is, 'go-to'-

HY: Oh, I see.

Mary: Yeah, and I don't know whether she was born in the fall or not. [chuckles]

Marie: No, I don't remember what Ruth's name was, her [unclear]-

HY: [unclear] same name?

Marie: No, no, I could- no, I forgot.

Mary: Show you the painting. [chuckling]

Marie: No, but I know she was-

Mary: [laughing] But I can't read Japanese.

HY: [unclear]

Marie: [unclear] Like, we're the founding members of the Sumi-e Society, like-

Mary: Did she sign it?

Marie: Yeah, so the founding members, we all have our, like, one special- I guess it would be on there.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: 'Cause Ruth gave us our names, so- like, I'm [ko-sai?], which is tranquility fulfilled, or some serenity fulfilled, or something like that. And what was yours?

Mary: [laughing] Don't ask me.

Marie: [laughing] Oh. But I think there was a lot of say [?], which was [unclear]-

HY: What kind of [unclear] was she?

Marie: I think she, um-

HY: She sent to Japan, no?

Marie: Yeah, I think so.

HY: [unclear]-

Mary: It might have been, or some, was it Chinese people?

Marie: Well, in the later years, I know that- He's no longer there, but it was run by the art gallery-

Mary: Oh, see-ke-mo [?]?

Marie: See-kee-mo [?], the shop. So, when I took over and got the seals, I took a [unclear] to [unclear]. [To Mary] What did you do?

[00:20]

Mary: Oh, I went to this Chinese shop on Midland.

Marie: Oh. But then Ruth told me she went the see-kee-mo [?]. So, I went there.

HY: So, you got the brush, and the paper from a Chinese supply store at that time?

Mary: Well, for the students, but I used to buy mine in Japan. Whoever went, I asked them to bring me back- [chuckling]

Marie: Yeah-

Mary: A thing and-

Marie: Yosh, I think, he would from the early days, like this would be in the '70s, [to someone off-screen] I guess ikenobo, did they go? I don't know. But anyways, like, she would get the brushes. And what I can't get over is, it's 33- or 3500 yen, like, that's marked on there. Now, that was what it was, say, 30, 40 years ago. 30 years ago. And it's still the same 33- or 3500 yen, it's just that in those days, I think Yosh Fukushima got it for us. I think we only paid 15 dollars. Well, now it's about 50. But I can't understand how it could still be the same price. You know, for the Japanese.

Mary: [laughing]

Yeah.

Marie: But then, when the Centre program first opened, I think they imported all the brushes from Japan. And this was really [unclear]. Because before we started, we had the very good brushes. So, it was an advantage there, I think. 'Cause now, you know, the ones you buy at the Chinese stores are not quite as good. So- but we all started with the best. [laughs]

Mary: Well, the students used to say, "Well, it's your brush that you have." So, I said, "Well, they could use it." [laughing]

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: See how good you can get.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: I said, "It's really not the brush, it's the hand that's holding the brush." [laughing]

HY: But you needed only one brush?

Mary: Yes.

Marie: That's right.

Mary: So, if you hold it at- perpendicular, you can get very fine lines. And if you put it at an angle, you can get fatter and fatter lines.

Marie: So, at the time I was teacher, since I had learned with the one brush. I said to the students, "It might seem difficult, kind of silly to use the one brush," but I said, "This way, you're forced to use the brush properly, because you have to bring your arm up to- and the amount of pressure you use. Whereas, if you have a thin brush, then you just automatically use that as like a pencil." So, I used to say, "That's why we stress the one brush method." That Ruth had taught us.

HY: So, you teach the one brush method-

Mary and Marie: Yes.

Mary: But when I took up Chinese painting, oh, they had a brush for everything. [laughs]

Marie: Yeah. Next thing you know, you've got this big brush holder full of brushes. And here with Ruth, you just had the one brush, no matter what size. Even if it's a small little painting, you still use the same brush.

Natalie: And so, when did you both start teaching? What year?

Marie: Well-

Mary: [To Marie] Well, you started earlier.

Marie: Yeah, but must have been the late '70s, Ruth asked me to take over the Wednesday class. But then I just started with beginners. And then I think I moved up to intermediate and advanced. But when I first started, it was the beginners on Wednesday. And then, in about 1981 or so, she wanted to retire. So, she asked me to take over from her classes. So, I did. So, I think I started around 1981.

Mary: Yeah, because she really used to phone me all the time, [laughing] and I say, "You know, I'm busy working, I've got kids to take care of, housework to do." I said, "I don't have time for-"

HY: Sorry- [noises off camera]

Marie: Not only that, but then, like, Yosh Fukushima and Kou [?] were helping her. But I happened to be the younger one, so she said if I would take over.

Mary: Yeah, because those ladies were getting on in age. I went to the JCC in the fall of '81, to assist [Kou Kitagawa?]. In the following spring of '82, I took over the beginner classes.

[00:25]

Mary: And I think I stayed- I think by then I had- I wrote down Marie had extensions one, two, and three. And then, in the spring of '87, I got graduated to the intermediate and advanced classes.

Marie: And then I went back to work, so then I found that it was too hard to work and- so then I asked Mary to take over.

Mary: Well, I took over from you in 1990.

Marie: Oh, you were [unclear].

Mary: See, 'cause 1989- oh, in end of 1980, I went to your extension classes so I could see how Marie was teaching her classes, so I'd learn something. [laughs] I wouldn't be completely dumbfounded when I got there. And yeah-

Marie: Yeah, 'cause I went with Ruth, she asked me for- So, she asked me to come to see how she taught the extensions. And I guess I was there for two sessions, like you know, it was always just spring and fall, but 10 lessons each. And then I think somewhere along the line we said 10 was too long, so we cut it down to eight. [laughs]

Mary: Yeah, well that was further down.

Marie: Was it further down?

Mary: Yeah, because Kou Kitagawa [?], in '87, she retired from Wednesday afternoons, so Yosh Fukushima took over. And we had [Ray Miki?] teaching the beginners.

Marie: And then, you know, that was the, there was a [Joy Suki?], too.

Mary: Oh, but in '89 Yosh retired from Wednesday afternoons, so [Ray Miki?] took over her class. And [Joyce Wheatley?] had the beginners.

Marie: It was Monday nights, then Wednesday afternoons, and Thursday evenings for sumi-e classes. And- so we went Thursday nights for the advanced extensions that we [unclear].

Mary: So, when I took over your classes, Peter Ito took over the intermediate and the advanced. And Ray retired from Wednesday afternoons.

Marie: So, there's been different people. But it's surprising how it's still popular. You know, from '63? That's a long time.

Mary: Cathy came in there somewhere- oh, I know, Cathy, in '96, started the beginners on Monday night. And I wanted Peter to take over the beginner, intermediate, and advanced, but he refused. So, we met him '96 with Marie, and Cathy said she'll take the beginners, intermediate, and advanced. Peter took the Wednesday afternoons, and I took over extension one, two, and three, and I added another class, extension four. And that's '96. 1996, yeah. I think- [to Marie] did I-?

HY: Extension four and five.

Mary: Yeah. Five didn't come until, maybe about-

Marie: Oh yeah, it was late-

Mary: '97. A year later. But all this came up because- remember that lady, the new Director?

Marie: Oh yeah, Laura.

Mary: She wanted changes made in the sumi-e class set up. I mean, you can only teach the same- I thought you had to learn what Ruth started off with in order to learn the basics. But she wanted it shook up, so I first said, "Okay, if I teach all these lessons, I'm gonna have to shorten the classes. So, we went to seven lessons for one term and the students didn't like it at all. [laughing] So, I went back up to eight. And it's eight now, isn't it?"

Marie: Yes, eight.

Mary: 'Cause ten was just too long.

Marie: Yeah, like that's two and a half months. And then at that time- like, we thought it was written in stone, I think, you know, the schedule.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: So, there'd be all these different things coming, [you know, you have to?]- So, we just never changed that, because it was the third week in March in the spring for 10 weeks from there, every Monday through Thursday.

[00:30]

Marie: And then in the fall, it was also the third week of September for 10 weeks, what would go into, you know, beginning of December, sometimes. But, you know, Thanksgiving-

Mary: And lot of the ladies, they took off in the spring, or they took off in the winter because they wanted to go down south.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: You know, so I think it was good that we shortened it.

Marie: Yeah, I think so. So, you know how even the calligraphy classes are eight-

Mary: Well, we're down to six now.

Marie: Yeah, six-

Mary: But then she teaches winter, too.

Marie: Yeah. You [points to someone off-screen] teach winters too, January-

Mary: No, I didn't teach winters-

Marie: No, no-

Mary: Oh. [gestures in the same direction]

HY: No, no, I never [?] [unclear] the spring and fall-

Mary: Spring and fall, yeah.

Marie: Yeah. I know they always used to ask, "Why don't you have it in January or, you know-" I says, "Oh, no." [laughs]

Mary: Yeah, oh and Ruth gave me more lessons to make up extensions four and five, and I didn't have enough for five, so I made up a couple of lessons in that and in one, two, and three. But by the time they got to extension five, I didn't need eight lessons, I said, "You're going to take two lessons to complete one painting," so I needed only four. Yeah, 'cause I said, "There's no way you can just dash off these sceneries and things in one lesson." Yeah.

HY: You did the [unclear] student come to the class between 10 to 15 people to start, how many people have been since-

Marie: Well, when we started there were 20, at least 20 in the-

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: In the beginner's class. And then, by the time we went for our seal, there was just Mary and I. [Marie and Mary laugh] Intermediate there were maybe 10, and next thing you know maybe less, so it's just the two of us.

Mary: I think there was one guy.

Marie: Yeah, was there?

Mary: Remember?

Marie: Well, there was Mr. Kadoguchi. He was-

Mary: Oh, he was the father of Bob Kadoguchi-

Marie: And he would then come there and he would paint- now, at that time, I thought 80 was quite old. But I think he was in his 80s. [laughs]

Mary: He painted nice horses.

Marie: Yeah, he- and then he drew a monkey, and he just filled the whole page with monkeys, and, you know, it was really delightful to see him so enthusiastic. It's just like there's this one gentleman taking up calligraphy, he's 91.

HY: Wow.

Marie: Yeah-

Mary: [unclear].

Marie: Yeah, so, he's really like you never even think of the age, you know, he was- [laughs]

Mary: Yeah, you don't have to do anything physical except [mimes brushstrokes] move your hand and grind the stone.

Marie: But then a lot of times, you know, as you get older, it might shake, but, you know, they're all fine.

Mary: Yeah. Oh, talking about inkstone, I must say that I never used the bottled ink in my classes. I said, "You can use it at home and what have you," but I said, "I learned from Ruth and Marjorie, and it's passed on to me that you must all grind your ink stick on the ink stone, and that's the time you take to slow down, you've all been working, and contemplate on what you're going to paint so that you get into the right frame of mind for painting."

Marie: And then I think, you know, you do it in a circular motion, I think it tends to relax you, then I say, "Take deep breaths, make your ink." But then I think when they first start, the thing is, they're just so anxious to start painting that they don't make the ink black enough, so everything is, you know, grey kind of. And I say, "Well, you know, you have to take the time, that's part of the art."

HY: Kind of meditation [unclear]-

Mary: That's right.

Marie: That's right. So, I says, "You know, set up," and I think Yosh was one who couldn't even take- like, to bring a coffee or tea or anything, just nothing. You know, you had to come there and paint. [laughs]

Mary: Well, I had one young girl from Peter's class who came to join me. Finally, I had to ask the mother to take her out, because she'd be listening to her earphones, chewing gum, and drinking pop. [laughing] She wasn't really getting into the painting.

Marie: No, so but then I think before, I don't know what it is now, people are now, but at that time they all sort of listened and- there was no pop or anything like that at the table.

Mary: We just had tea and things like that at the end of the year.

[00:35]

Marie: Yeah, at the end of the year we used to always- like, Mrs. Nikaido [?] was teaching calligraphy at that time. So, she was in the east room of the old Centre, and we'd be in the west room, and they would bring their- like show and tell. So, we always made sure all the sumi-e artists, you know, had one piece they wanted to put up on the wall. And then the

shodo group would bring something, and we all had a joint party to celebrate the year end. Mary: And there was this old lady called Mrs. Nishimura, remember her? She always made sushi for us.

Marie: And a lot! Like, she would bring this whole plastic container filled with sushi already cut. And I- that was another lady, though, really nice, Mrs. Nikaido[?]. That would be about the third cultural program that came in, after ikenobo, sumi-e, and shodo. She was such a soft-spoken woman, and a very nice lady.

Natalie: Can you tell us about what you most enjoyed about teaching?

Marie: Teaching? Well, the thing is, like, you know, I was showing everybody the same pattern, but it was interesting to see how everybody- like, even though it was the same painting-

Mary: Painter. [laughing]

Marie: How they interpret it, you know? But then I used to always say, you know, like, "Don't look at the painting, the brush stroke, do it over like you have in your mind what you want to do and then do it," because if you hesitate your- sumi-e, you know how it shows, whatever. So that's why I said, "Just have it in your mind, and just go with the flow. And- but it's funny how some people who are so big, and others are so small, you know. But I said that's the part I found interesting, and when they really enjoyed it, so it was gratifying for me then, you know, to teach. And I think when you teach, you improve yourself. Because, you know, when you have to go for class, like, you would force yourself to practice something. So, I think you improve if you teach.

Mary: That's right. [chuckles]

HY: Teaching is also studying.

Mary: That's right, it is.

Marie: Yeah. And then, like, sumi-e is one art form, I think, that the strokes are so important. You know, how the brush lays and, you know the pauses [unclear].

Natalie: Did you want to talk about what you found enjoyable about teaching?

Mary: Oh, well the same thing. And when they graduated, they did well, that was lovely, yeah.

Marie: It's what makes you feel good, that they enjoyed it. So, like I say, it made it worthwhile for me, too.

Mary: And they enjoyed it well enough that they'd come after working all day. 'Cause our classes were in the evening, eh. And that they'd be there 'til nine, and I'm starting to clean up and they're still painting!

Marie: [chuckles] I guess they don't change.

HY: You only spend one and half hours-

Mary: Yes.

Marie: 7:30 'til 9. But a lot of people come around seven, so you're going there about seven, you think, "Well, I guess I should be there." You know, so-

Mary: I started going around six one time, you know, 'cause they were already there, for goodness' sake. I didn't teach them or anything, but I, you know, criticized what they were

doing and all. Arthur says, "That's early enough." [chuckles]

Marie: Yeah, I don't think I ever came at six though I was always-

Mary: 6:30.

Marie: Yeah, 6:30, quarter to seven.

Natalie: And what was the- when the students received their seals what was that moment like, what kind of things would you do for the graduation?

Marie: Well, you see, like the seal ceremony started after the- like, we developed this Sumi-e Society. So, in our June meeting we had a [unclear] seal. But prior to that, we just gave it at the last lesson. So-

Mary: So, it was a nice sort of a ceremony. They could bring their friends, or, you know, their partners, or whatever to the graduation ceremony.

[00:40]

Mary: And Marie would- she's still carrying around all the signed scrolls- [laughing]

Marie: I know. In the cabinet, but then it doesn't fit in the cabinet, so it's in my closet downstairs.

Mary: Yeah, the- it's a scroll, and they put the seal on it, and then they sign it, and then they- do they write down what it means or something?

Marie: Yeah, they [unclear]. And, like, the name, actually and then the meaning of it.

Mary: Yeah. Their own signature. And they do it in front of the group, you know. And they show their paintings- Gosh, these days, you've got them framed. [laughing] In my days, at the beginning, we just sort of pasted it on the wall.

Marie: That's about it, it's much more formal now. Which is nice, I think, 'cause-

Mary: Well, I got to the point where I had foam core, I cut out the frame and then, you know, put it on that, and put the part that you cut up, you make it the backing, you know, and I'd do that for them. [To Marie] It's funny to think how it all started.

Marie: Yeah. Because before, like I say, we used to just put it up against the wall down in the west room and-

Mary: Tape it to the wall.

Mary: [to someone offscreen] Well, your son had a very nice thing where his student won one of the awards at the joint art show that we had last fall. And Mr. Kensaki [?] was there.

HY: Yes.

Mary: They used his painting as the card for Momiji.

Marie: [unclear]

HY: Yes, he's the oldest student. He's 93 years old.

Mary: Yeah, 93, gosh.

Marie: He used to be the *kiku* [chrysanthemum] master, so, like now at 91, and since he's moved to Momiji, he can't have all the people, I guess, so.

Mary: Well, they're like babies.

Marie: Oh, he would start his whole thing. And then they wouldn't go anywhere because he had to look after the chrysanthemums. So, they couldn't travel anywhere because they said

that, you know, you have to turn it around into all the little posts. It was a full-time job because he must have had several, quite a few and not just several, but quite a few.

Mary: Yeah, plants-

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: My husband's plants, they finally flowered after the show. [laughing] And even in the garage- but he brought them in, and they flourished. And he'd cut up a few and put it on the table, you know. And we had flowers for about a month after, so it was nice.

Marie: [unclear] son was the eldest.

HY: Eldest, yeah. I'm teaching at the Momiji, and start 10 to 12, two hours a class. But he always- at nine o'clock, he's there. [laughing]

Marie: Yeah, I think when he likes something- I mean he's very enthusiastic.

Mary: So, is there any more questions?

Natalie: Yeah- should we take a break?

PW: Yeah, why don't we take a break.

[00:45]

Marie: Yeah, where are we now? [looking at paper]

Natalie: We're on the first page.

HY: [laughs]

[video pauses]

[video resumes]

Marie: Myself, like would just do things would two strokes.

Natalie: Yeah.

Marie: So, I like to do bamboo with the flowers and birds. Like, I'm not too into scenery. I have done it but, I tend to go more towards the bamboo, see, things like that. Like I feel- I enjoy that- but so, like before a show, I might have all sorts of bamboos that just doesn't go when I- [chuckles] the way I want it to [chuckles]. And you just can't go back and fix it up, say. So, I like that part of the sumi-e. You, just like two, when you go to two strokes.

Mary: Well-

Marie: We're two different styles [chuckles].

Mary: Yeah. I'm more like Terry Adachi used to be. Very detailed, see. But when you see the first ideas I- I dash it all with a black marker. And it's very rough, and you think, how did she ever get that from there to the end. But from that, I have to get a little bit more detail, and then I stop painting, I start with the thing that's most important on a painting. And then you keep building on that. Marie does hers so quickly [laughs].

Marie: [laughs]

Mary: And my husband says, "Why are you spending so much time on everything?" [laughs]

Mare: Yeah. But in- Before I paint though, like I do different sketches. Like not on a big piece of paper, like small ones, to see wherever I want to put the stalks or the leaves, or things like that. So, in my mind, I know if I look at that, then I know what I want to do. So, I'll do it. So, you know, it doesn't take me very long [chuckles].

Mary: [chuckles]

Marie: But then I could do quite a few before I'm fully satisfied.

Mary: Yeah. I do- I do only one. But when I started it, it takes me, I don't know, five to six months from beginning to the end. And- but I don't work on it constantly. Like, you know, I used to get up, and make lunch for somebody, and then if I have time, I'll go back on it. But if I don't have time, it's till next day. But up to now, we were busy looking at the two grandchildren, so I didn't have too much time.

Natalie: [chuckles]

Mary: Yeah, so the last- last painting, I think I did it in a month which was a record- [chuckles]

Marie: A record.

Mary: -For me [laughs]. Yeah. But I like my time doing it. And then when I do it, I like to add- Some- some of them, I didn't add color. You, the la- The first time, I did the- the Hikone castle.

HY: Beside from Katara [unclear].

Mary: Yeah. Yeah. No, I mean I did from my old photographs. I was there. You know. But that took me a long time 'cause I remember Kathy came by once and she says, "Oh, you're still working on that?" [laughs]

Marie: [laughs] Yeah.

Mary: But I did that just in black and white, and it did take just as long as the others, you know. But then I add color, wait till it dries, and then you have to wait till next day, and then you add a little bit of color [chuckles]. But I learned that from the Chinese artists there [turns to Marie], remember?

Marie: Yeah. I know like, when I do the bamboo, like so it's wet, so I have to put it aside before I do leaves, because otherwise it would run into. So, and then I- I don't know, I've been doing birds. Birds- Well, it's not as detailed as Terry, everybody has their own style. So, that's why I say, like, you give the same pattern to fifteen people and they all have their own interpretation which I- I like.

HY: What kind of paper do you use?

Mary: Oh. I think- I think some of its mulberry. You- It's Japanese paper, you know.

HY: [unclear] [off-screen sound]

Marie: Yeah.

HY: Mulberry paper you use, mostly?

Mary: Well, mulberry or something.

Marie: Well-

Mary: See, I buy it all over, but I don't realist-

[00:50]

Mary: The only thing I know is these expensive papers that I bought from the Japanese Paper Place. Oh God, they were expensive [chuckles].

Marie: Yeah. Like, that's why I think twice about using that when I do bamboo because, you know, like it just doesn't work out sometimes and I think, that's a very expensive piece of paper.

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: So, I use basically the moderate priced, like you can get them for about eight dollars a sheet. And then- Yeah, so I like, when I'm like when I'm doing it for a show, I usually get to go to the Japanese Paper Place, and I buy paper.

Mary: Yeah. I like working on the handmade paper, it has a very- When you put water on it- Well, every paper is different but, you know, but it's easier to work with, and it's more friendly to the brush. Yeah.

Marie: But then there's like Chinese paper. I guess the most expensive one is always about five dollars. They don't seem to have like the better- I guess they're not handmade. I don't know, I don't know if they are.

Mary: Well, you can count the edges.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: You know, what you call- the cut. And I know some of these things, you know, I'm slow and I keep working at the thing, but there was painting I did of the- I called it the inner passage but I- It was when we were coming down the- from Alaska down. We were in between the islands and stuff. And I saw these eagles and I just loved them. So, that's when I did that painting. Well, you know I was halfway through [laughs] and the brush went right through the paper.

Marie: Oh!

Mary: So, I cut out the good part and I still have it. But that's- that's the one I was- I sold to Mr.- He's passed away now.

HY: Okuno.

Mary: Yeah, Matthew Okuno. And I didn't know who he was. And he said, "Do you trust me for the money?" [laughs]. And I said, "Well, I don't know you."

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: Then Ruth came along. She said, "Oh, he's very good for the money." [laughs and then pauses] But anyways, you have accidents like that, don't you?

Marie: Well, that's why I don't wet them out myself.

[speaking simultaneously]

Mary: Oh yeah, I never-

HY: Oh, you don't?

Marie: No.

Mary: Yeah, I never-

HY: You never [laughs] Oh!

Mary: I never wet my own stuff.

Marie: I take it to the Chinese.

Mary: [nods] Chinese.

HY: Oh, I see.

Marie: Yeah. 'Cause for five dollars or ten dollars, I know it'll come back without any-

Mary: [laughs]

HY: [laughs]

Marie: Because, you know, that paper is- It turns, it twists-

Mary: Fragile.

Marie: Yeah, fragile. And when it's wet, like, it rips so easily, you know. So, I know- like I know the recipe and all, basically what to do. So, if it's small I might, but I just take it over to the shop [chuckles].

Mary: Oh, yes, and [Pearsa?] taught us at our- one of our workshops to- Painting our own- Well, I can't do that, but he taught us how to sprinkle gold on my paintings.

Marie: [nods]

Mary: And I did it once [laughs].

Marie: Yeah. Yeah, that was nice.

Mary: I think- I think I bought sticks from you.

HY: Oh! Did you?

Mary: Yeah. But I but I forget how you melt it or anything.

Marie: When was the first time? It was still at the old conference center when I asked you.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: And you were doing the one with the gold leaf.

HY: Oh, yes, that one.

Mary: And you bought it. That little package [demonstrates size with fingers], it's so fragile.

HY: [laughs]

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: I keep buying these supplies and then they [chuckles] [unclear] came out around my art table.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: Yeah, we had to downsize, so Arthur, he dismantled my huge art table [demonstrates size with arms] I had. It had a drawer for paper, and drawers down the side. Now it's all in boxes [laughs]!

Marie: Oh.

Mary: And he tried to find a- find a drawer that's flat enough to put paper in it all. I can't find it.

Marie: Well, I have a- What is that white board? You know, the particle board, or whatever you call it?

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: And I clip it, and I keep paper in there and then slide it in. Like a-

Mary: Slide it in where?

Marie: Into this like [unclear] I put it away that way. Like in my basement.

Mary: Oh.

Marie: Like the Japanese paper that I buy.

[00:55]

Mary: [nods] Yeah.

Marie: Like I don't want to fold them. So- What is that right there? [unclear]

Mary: [unclear] Okay.

Marie: [nods] Yeah, two pieces. And then- 'Cause I don't work any bigger than- Well, I've never worked that big. But I keep my paper that way, flat.

Mary: Oh, in between?

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: Mine's rolled up and it keeps falling out, out of the closet [laughs].

[All laugh except Marie]

Marie: Well, if you roll it up, then it's hard to paint on and then you flatten it again. Whereas this way, I keep it between [unclear], and then I have those clips. So [nods].

Mary: Now I learned something.

[All laugh]

Natalie: And how do you store your paintings if you have some paintings you want to keep?

Marie: Well, I do the same thing, with the [unclear].

Mary: I don't have that many paintings I want to keep [laughs].

Marie: Yeah, well I have different things that I've started and didn't finish. Like I say, I have a lot of, see, bamboo. But the thing is, I don't remember which inkstone I use [laughs].

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: So, sometimes I have to go the side and think, "Oh, is this the one?"

HY: Do you have any kind of art, like, education or art experience before you start your sumi-e?

Marie: No, I didn't really because I- Well, just what you do during kindergarten and grade one.

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: Because I was at, you know, during the evacuation, which was the small, you know, [unclear]. And then when I came to Ontario, we were still out in the farm, so there was no art department. So- But I always liked art and so when I sa- saw this Centre I thought, "Oh well I'll try that." And then after that, we'd gone to so many different classes, and we finished our sumi-e. Then we went to this Chinese artist for about three years. And then we went to Life Drawing, Oil. And-

Mary: And painting in different mediums [as a tool, right?].

Marie: Oh yeah, mixed medium. So, I say, I don't know if I would've gone through all that without Mary [points to Mary].

[Mary and HY laugh]

Marie: But then so, we've been sort of like a pair.

Mary: [laughs] Well- well, when I know she- she's going and you know, if I say, I don't feel so hot today, she won't go. And I think, "Well, I must make an effort to go."

Marie: So, then we went to the ROM [Royal Ontario Museum], to learn watercolor [nods].

Mary: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

HY: So, you study- after sumi-e, you study [unclear].

[both speaking simultaneously]

Marie: Yes, that's what we did.

Mary: Yes. Yeah.

Marie: Well, she was learning to become commercial. I just-

Mary: Yeah, I was a commercial artist, before. Yeah. I think it didn't do any harm by not going there because I learned what I wanted to learn and well, when I was very small, my mother said I would go to ka-mi-ji-go-ku. [laughs] You know what that means? It's how the people waste paper-

Marie: Like they always say, you don't waste this, don't waste that, you know, or your-

Mary: She said I was always wasting paper drawing all over everything. But I always liked to draw. And I thought, well if I can't go to art college- I went- I went to OCA [Ontario College of Art] in the evening classes. I took a few courses. I think I took some at Central Tech, where I graduated from. And I worked mainly for- Well, first ten years I worked for this man that dragged me around to all the other companies [laughs].

Marie: [laughs]

Mary: And then I worked for McClain Hunter until it went out of business after- But I got to design their 100 yearbook. And they- they sent it out to all the libraries across Canada. I was- I was just the art director on it, you know, I didn't actually draw and such. But it was interesting. And then after that I went freelancing and I used to- Well, this guy would tell- The art director would tell me what- what they wanted, sort of thing. And you know, they'd- they wouldn't hand me copy, or- I think they handed me a bit of copy, but my job was to take that and design something out of it. So, that's what I used to do, commercially. Yeah. And then the- the computer came in, and I hated it 'cause they- they had me to setting the type for ads and things.

[01:00]

Mary: And you know, I thought, "Gee they're- they're wasting their money paying me for setting type because I couldn't do typing very well [laughs]. I did take one year of typing when I couldn't find a job after high school. Still can't type. And then, any who, yeah after that what happened? Well, I took up sum- sumi-e with you.

Marie: Yeah. Yeah.

Mary: Really enjoyed it [chuckles].

Natalie: So, when you look back from when you started sumi-e, and when you first graduated to now, do you notice any change in your style of painting? Or did you have a real signature style that stayed with you over time?

Marie: Well, I think I've just been painting pretty all the same because, well, for one thing I've been very busy with different things, like Sick Kids and all these different things, so I don't really have a lot of time to sit and think about. But then before a show, I would just take the time.

Mary: And dash it all off [laughs].

Marie: So, you know- but then basically I know I like, and I just do that.

Natalie: And so, all the other courses you took, they enhanced your artistic life, and they changed-

Marie: Yeah. Well, like- like I enjoy the oil, but then I found it so tedious because you have to mix the color on the side. Whereas I like the idea of sumi-e watercolor, where you can just mix your color and just paint. So, I prefer that.

HY: So, you've done the other art form for sumi-e [laughs].

Marie: Yes, but then after- after sumi-e, but then I always came back to sumi-e because I enjoyed it more than the other art forms, you know. So, it appealed to me more. So, even though I did paint the others, I still came back to sumi-e.

Mary: I remember in- Was it '88? No, '98. No, 2008 [shakes head and laughs]. I thought I- I'd like to go to university and my husband thought I was crazy. But I said, "I'll just take one course." So, I applied, and I got in and showed my samples. And he says, "Well, we don't really teach Chinese or Japanese brush painting" [laughs]. I said, "I know you don't," I just wanted to learn all the different mediums. So, I took up- It was all in acrylics, and it was composition in color. And I really enjoyed it. And then they went on strike [laughs].

HY: Oh!

Mary: And then they went on strike at York University. But I did finish a course. I have to ask them if- if I'm going to get my marks or not, they're not doing anything [laughs]. But I thought, yeah, one of my paintings, it was what you see, looking through the window at dimensions so I [shrugs shoulders] painted my grandchildren playing in the snow through the window, and I made a Christmas card out of it. But I enjoyed it while- while I was doing it, yeah. But my husband got sick and tired of being my chauffeur.

[All laugh]

Mary: He'd have to drive all the way up to Keele and whatever and then- and then come back and then, you know, three hours later he'd- when I'd phoned, he'd have to come back and pick me up. But it was enjoyable, yeah.

Natalie: Do you ever like to write into your paintings? Some people like to add.

Marie: Well, I do my Christmas cards with [unclear]. So, I enjoyed that and basically that's about it. And then this calligraphy class I teach, [always there's sumi-e artists?], she wants us to include some sumi-e. So, there was something with a run. So, she wanted me to incorporate that into my calligraphy. But- And I think when we did flowers- We put, yeah, we put some painting into.

[01:05]

Marie: But basically, I don't. Because I don't really-

Mary: I don't think you should write Japanese into those things unless you're a good writer. Could go different. 'Cause it looks terrible when some amateur writes these things on the [flora?], I think they're spoiling the paintings.

Marie: Well, you know you're- Well that's one thing, like I really don't know what it says but kinda know the order of the strokes.

HY: [laughs]

Marie: As far as I know, I mean, sometimes I'm wrong. But basically, I do figure what must be- And it doesn't seem to look right. You know, when I see some- Because some people, I think they were copying something they saw and then they write it on the side. So, whenever a student did that, I say, "Well, don't do that, if you don't-" Because as I say, I don't know what it says, but I know it doesn't look right.

[All laugh]

Marie: What I'm famous for, right, is doing strokes in different orders.

[All laugh]

Marie: Other than the prescribed way, but anyways [laughs]. Yeah, but also actually, it's only in shodo that I would, if the teacher asks, then I might add some painting. But on my own-

HY: Both- Both of you study Japanese calligraphy?

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Well, that's the other thing we started with Mrs. Nikaido. Then she got sick and then she stopped and then Mrs. Renaka started, and then she took her classes to her home. So, I said, "Oh well, we don't wanna go there." Then, Mrs. Miyama came. And so, then we both started again.

Mary: [chuckles] We're still at it.

Marie: Yeah, we're still at it. Like I- We say like Japanese are in the Oriental art. I think there's no finish. We just keep on learning. So, I know Mrs. Nikaido used to say like people from Jap- They would just finish page after page, you know, like she'd have a booklet of haiku and that. And she says, "You know, you don't have to be in a hurry, it's not like- you know, you should take your time learning each page."

Natalie: Have you tried different kind of ways of showing your artwork, like painting on fabric, or drawing into like screens, or painting on a kimono, any of these things?

Marie: Well, one girl asked me if I would draw an iris for a lamp. You know, so she did put it on a lamp. And then- Well, I used to do original, like, art on each card. But then I would use, like, mink patterns of a fan or something and then paint inside of it. But when the silk- Yeah, I've tried silk but- actually, I don't know where you'd get the silk to paint [unclear], so I usually basically used paper.

Mary: Yeah, well, I was once asked to do a [unclear] painting.

Marie: Oh yeah.

Mary: You know, on the outline- What was his name? Was it George? Kamata?

HY: Oh, Kamata!

Mary: Yeah. Yeah. We took it under him.

HY: Oh, yeah.

Mary: And he only does that [unclear].

Marie: Yeah, yeah, we were over there for a couple of sessions. So, it was interesting, but then again, it was merely quite popular but it sort of petered out, you know. But that's why I say it was sumi-e. Something that had started from '63 and is still going strong.

Mary: Before I was asked to do something different, the classes were coming down. In fact, I think of that time before [Mrs. Oda?] ever [unclear]. It was Kunio Suyama. And I said, "Gosh, do you really want to keep these classes 'cause I just have two students, you know, they're getting private lessons from me" [laughs].

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: I guess they wanted to. But it came back up, you know. After I included all the other things.

HY: Which year did the sumi-e get popularity?

Mary: Well, I think at the beginning, I think [turns to Marie].

Marie: I think at the beginning because, like I said, there used to be plenty just beginners in the class that we started. And then Ruth used to teach Mondays and Thursdays, and Wednesday afternoon. So, there was enough people there to run them.

[01:10]

Marie: And I think when I first took over Wednesday afternoon, there must have been about 15 to 20 people. And that was quite busy [chuckles] [unclear].

Mary: Yeah, you could- you could round it twice if you had- if you had that many people.

Marie: So- But I don't know about the class sizes now.

HY: There are mostly 15 people in the class.

Mary: Is that all different levels?

HY: All level [unclear]. Wednesday morning, I open creative class for sumi-e for people who have more than three years' experience who can do any kind of style. People, after graduate sumi-e, some people develop more new style of sumi-e. But people like to paint.

Marie: Yeah, well, the last three years I've been painting and teaching sumi-e up at the [Yee Hong?] center as a Japanese senior.

HY: Oh!

Marie: When I first started three years ago, they were able to hold a [brush?] of paint. But the last little while, like some had died and some are getting elderly. And then I had fell sick there in 2000, and so then last year I went back, and I thought, "This is kinda hard," so I got another artist to do it with me. And to see it. And it was- it was also- They seemed to enjoy it, even though they have a hard time holding the brush. So, it's not you're teaching them,

but basically, you're sort of helping them paint. So, I fo- I sort of enjoyed that, but I found it was a bit too hard for me.

Natalie: When you're doing your own painting, where do you find your inspiration?

Mary: Oh, from my travels.

Natalie: Travels?

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Well, you know, I saw bamboo in Stanley Park in BC, you know. Like, this is after the war. And then when I first saw it in Japan, it was quite exciting, you know, to see the actual plant, because I don't see any here. So, like that I enjoy. But then, like, birds, and I have a bird feeder, so they come to my backyard so, I like to see that. So, I think that's- 'cause my painting, I wouldn't call it an outdoor, I don't go out and sketch anything from the real scenery. But then I have it in my mind, some bird, or trees, or something. So, then I just- it's in my head, and I just paint.

Mary: Yeah, it's- it's interesting, like now that I'm a senior's senior [chuckles]. When you look at the flowers that come up in the back. I'm getting too old to even plant them now [laughs]. And right outside my patio there's a lot of trees, they come around and some years when the patients are doing well, they used to come around and I used to paint them.

Marie: I think I had a wisteria tree. I couldn't get over the flowers. This one year-

Mary: They're gorgeous.

Marie: Yeah. So, then I really liked painting that too.

Natalie: So, now I'm curious: travels [chuckles]. Where did you travel and what did you see that you brought to painting?

Mary: Well, remember I told you I put my brush through the painting, well that was when I went to Alaska. We were coming down south. And never had I learned to paint these, you know, killer whales? The orcas. I never got up close to them. Then we went to Newfoundland, and I never did see the icebergs out there [laughs]. There weren't any last summer.

Marie: Yeah. So, basically my paintings- I might see something in a magazine or something. I'll think, "Oh, I like the colors that's on there." 'Cause if- A photo, but I like the way the colors shake. So, a lot of times I've save those kind of pictures that's in the magazine.

[01:15]

Marie: But as far as doing things from a natural scenery, I don't.

Mary: I take photographs. A lot of them. And sometimes my camera isn't big enough to take the whole panorama. So, I just try to pan each scene and try to join them up together so I can paint the whole scenery. And- Yeah, the Rockies were good for that. And then- Oh. We went to Yosemite Park. I ended up painting up into- the bus trip up to the top. And I took lots of pictures of what you could from there and it was the Half Dome. You know, the- I took pictures and then I painted a picture- painting of that. And then [I went well that could be fun?]. I was stuck in this little place called [Traggy?]. It was just up the hill from the

downtown area where the water was and right across was a- It looked like an empty house. So, I painted that. It was very nice. It was solitary and it was on the rocky thing. I don't know, I can only paint something that hits me as- as I want to paint, you know. I can't paint everything. My husband says, "Why don't you just hurry and paint it?" And I say, "I can't do that." I sometimes talked to Henry, that I have to paint that. And one day he was thrilled when I started to paint his- What was that big flower?

Marie: Oh, yeah. Man- Man- Man- ?

Mary: Mandevilla! Yeah. And I said, "All my relatives used to buy my painting and now I think they got enough." [laughs] They were my best customers.

[All laugh]

Mary: Now I'm giving away stuff to my son and daughter [chuckles].

Marie: What surprised me is I used to always have at least one bamboo, and I don't know if whether they all sold, for some reason.

Mary: [points to Marie] She does beautiful bamboo. You know, with the wisteria, little birds and things. They always sell.

Marie: Yeah, I don't know why but- so then I'm always- At the last minute, "Oh, I'll do bamboo again." [laughs]. From a different angle.

HY: The bamboo is a very popular subject [to paint?]

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Well, like I guess they give a bit of Oriental in, you know, Japanese or Chinese.

Mary: My paintings aren't Oriental enough [laughs]. For people in Canada.

HY: [laughs]

Mary: But my nephew loved my paintings in the Rockies. You know- you know from Banff you can go to a little thing where they have a- Is it Lake Moraine- ?

Marie: [talks simultaneously]

Mary: [makes motion with hand] -where they have all the things? Well, when I went there it was still icy. But I painted that, you know. And he really loved it. So, I can go visit all my relatives to see my paintings [laughs].

Marie: You know, I thought of that thing that- I think the last few years I haven't- I used to always photograph and write it down who bought it, you know.

Mary: Oh.

Marie: Yeah. But then, I don't know, I just got lazy and then never bothered after a couple years now.

Mary: [chuckles]

Natalie: Are there any artists that you have drawn inspiration from? Other artists?

Marie: I think for me it's Ruth Yamada. I liked her style.

Mary: Yeah, I liked [Pat Yuko?]

Marie: Oh, yeah [Pat Yuko was in there?] Chinese artist, I would say [Pat Yuko?] Whereas Ingrid Chow was the one that we'd get lessons from for all three years. Now he's passed away. But I like him too.

Mary: I liked the [unclear] of the series of horses with him.

Marie: Oh, yeah.

Mary: But he doesn't paint anymore, which is a shame.

Marie: But I think his mother, or somebody, was the early ones that-

Mary: Yeah, his mother and grandfather.

Marie: Yeah.

[01:20]

Mary: They started- You know the-

Marie: More realistic style.

Mary: Lingnan?

HY: Oh, Lingnan style.

Mary: Style, yeah [nods].

HY: Oh, yeah. A big change.

Mary: [nods]

Natalie: And what kind of color scheme do you use when- If you use color? What kind of- Like where would you get your paint from?

Marie: Watercolor. I have some chips and that, but I find that when you do, you know, the watercolor for the painting.

Mary: Yeah, the chips you have to paint on glue and everything else, it's such a bother [chuckles].

Mary: Yeah. Yeah well, I got those- the glue sticks but I've never melted them, so it was still as intact as when I bought it. And it's funny, you buy all these different inkstones, and they'll outlast me.

[All laugh]

Mary: You know that long one, that big one I have, I used at Mrs. Yamada's class. Well, she was laughing at how big it was once she seen it [chuckles]. How little it- I thought how little it took it if I died.

Marie: Yeah. One thing that's crazy is I like the smell of it, so then I'll buy it. But then, you know, just as why different [vibe?] inks going but.

Mary: Did you know they smell?

Marie: [nods] They have a nice smell.

Mary: They have a nice smell. The better the ink, the better the smell [laughs].

Marie: That's why if you have art supplies, or Oriental ones anyways, I think when you paint, like, you get your money's worth.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: You know.

Natalie: How do you pick an inkstone? If you want to get a new inkstone and you want a nice good one, a good quality one, how do you-?

Marie: Oh, just the looks of it.

Natalie: Yeah. Do you-?

Mary: [mimics rubbing something with her hand] You feel it. Yeah, the surface.

Marie: And there again, the better inkstones, the ink gets darker faster, you know. Whereas the other, the cheaper one, it takes forever.

Mary: [laughs and nods]

Marie: Yeah, so the better inkstones have the extra ink. And the ink stick, I guess.

Natalie: And do you have a favorite kind of brush or brushes that you like to work with?

Marie: Well, for me it's still that one brush that I've had. Like it's not the original one, but it's the same one that I get all the time. So, I like that size. Even after I've taken on different Chinese ones, I still prefer that one brush. Except for even if you're doing wash, I use [unclear]. But even that, when I'm doing a wash, some parts of it I use that brush too.

Mary: I spray the water on.

Marie: Yeah, well, I spray it. But there's some paper though, you know, it's a funny thing, it spots.

Mary: Is that right?

Marie: Yeah.

HY: When you get the water [unclear].

Marie: Yeah [nods].

Mary: Oh. When you spray it?

HY: If you spray whole paper-

Marie: [makes zig-zag motion with hand] Yeah, I always spray, I always spray.

HY: But that part of paper, you know, it's like-

Mary: Oh yeah, that hard mark shows up. Yeah, I spray the whole thing every-

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: -Every time I add something. So, if I do it seven or eight times-

Marie: Oh?

HY: You spray-?

Mary: Yeah, to get the different colors that I want.

Marie: But there's the other thing, when you first start to put the colors in, you know, it looks dark when it's wet? But then when it dries, it disappears [chuckles].

Mary: It disappears [chuckles].

Marie: So, I have to spray it again.

Mary: Then you have to learn which colors run.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: Like the reds.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: I had one painting of a lady in a kimono on it. I wouldn't sell it even though she loved it 'cause I said, "No, the reds run all over the place, I wouldn't sell it to you."

Marie: Well, when it comes right down to it, I like black and white. Black.

Natalie: What- what kind of venues have you shown your work? Is it- Do you usually prefer group showings, or do you sometimes do commissions? Or-

[01:25]

Marie: Yeah, I've had commissions.

Natalie: -Published some paintings?

Marie: But basically, I always just- I'm not really a prolific. I just- If I do two or three a year, that's about it. So, then it's usually a group show but then, you know, other people have asked me, they want a bamboo, so I, you know-

Mary: You had a show on at Lindsay.

Marie: Oh, yeah, I forgot about that [chuckles]. Yeah, that's right.

Natalie: How-how did that come about? That show?

Marie: How did that come about?

Mary: [Charles Liang?] Yeah, he was one that you used to work with.

Marie: [nods] Yeah, he asked me, I guess.

HY: Lindsay is a town near Peterborough?

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: Peterborough is this way [gestures to the left], and Lindsay is straight up [points upwards.]

HY: Somewhere in Japan, there's a sister city of-

Marie: That's right. That's right. Yeah. So, this year, I think was the 40th year or something, so. And then I did one- This was a long time ago, with [unclear names]. [unclear]. So, there was three of us.

Mary: We went to demonstrate at the top of the CN [Canadian National] Tower [laughs].

Marie: Oh, yeah. Yeah, well, we demonstrated all over the place though, you know, because- Well, Jim Murray used to be a great one. He'd say, "Oh, Marie you could do, you know, come and demonstrate." And so, we'd go. So, we've been to malls.

Mary: Chinese malls [laughs].

HY: [chuckles]

Marie: Chinese malls. And years ago, like, [Eaton's?]. They had this create the sun program. They had every spring; I can't remember what time of the year it was. So, they would always have demonstrations of sumi-e and all the different Japanese culture [chuckles]. I remember we went to CNE [Canadian National Exhibition]. I think we'd only had about 10, 20 lessons, at the most.

HY: [laughs]

Mary: [laughs] Two of us, hand shaking [demonstrates with hand.]

Marie: And then Jim asked us to go and demonstrate. And I thought, "Oh, good, there's nobody around. I'll just hurry up and make my ink and I'll paint." Well, next time I looked up, there's all these people around me [laughs].

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: And that was the first time I'd painted in front of people and I- My hand started to shake as I- So, I just said, "You can see I'm pretty nervous." And it's a funny thing. About

first few minutes, your hands shake. But then you get into this painting, and it sort of comes, and you-

Mary: Settle down.

Marie: -Yeah, settle down. But that first experience was really- [laughs]. And at that time, I didn't know about bottled ink, so I was busy making my ink [imitates mixing with hand] and I was- And I guess people were curious 'cause it was the hobby-and-something building.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: And Bob Kadoguchi and Mrs. Kadoguchi, they had the Nikkei logo, and they had a little table to the side. Yeah. So, that was my first experience of painting in front of people not at home.

[All laugh]

Mary: Well, do you- More recently, we were asked to paint at the-

Marie: Oh, yeah. [points] McMichael.

Mary: McMichael. Yeah. They had an evening- Who was it?

Marie: Well, it was the Japanese cook. I think they acquired of this Niagara-on-the-Lake- there's this cooking school there. And he had- There's some Japanese chefs from Japan- came. And so- Barry Colly, I think. So, the- They said that they wanted to have some Japanese. So, I think, flower arrangement and us. And so, we demonstrated there. And then Sheridan College. I think I did that about three years.

Mary: We went to Hamilton too.

Marie: Oh, yeah, that's right.

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: There's- [laughs]. Yeah, because when they opened up their community center- Like, Japanese community center, they asked that- So, I think, [Kou?] went, the first year she didn't want to go, so they asked me to go. So, I used to drive there. And this is how long ago it was- remember there was that one train wreck or something in Mississauga?

Mary: Oh, geez.

Marie: Yeah, so that was the night I was supposed to go. So, [Sid's sister?] would drive me. Because I used to drive myself, but then- So it took us, I don't know, we went all, you know, I think I got there about eight o' clock instead of seven o' clock.

[01:30]

Mary: And after that I thought, "I don't think I'll do this anymore" [laughs].

Marie: [laughs]

Mary: So, then I met Fumi Toyota.

HY: Yes.

Marie: At least, for me to go through the city traffic at rush hour, because to get there by 7, I have to start about 5:30 just as the rush hour's starting. So, I have to- So, I used to get there

on time but after that though- And then Ku- Fumi lives out in Mississauga. So, she misses that traffic, so she used to get-

Mary: You had- You had- You were- You spun around on ice one time, too.

Marie: Oh, yeah. One night. 'Cause out in the mountain, it gets icy. And I was driving, and I spun around, and I thought, "Well, this isn't my cup of tea anymore" [laughs].

[All laugh]

Marie: Yeah, but then- So, I think I went there, oh, I don't know how many- Couple years, maybe. That's why I forget all these different places I used to go to [chuckles].

Mary: [chuckles]

Marie: And then I- Like, different people I know would ask me to show some children in grade four or five, you know, because they were taking Japanese history or art, cultural things. So, I would go there, and, in those times, I would just demonstrate one thing and then I had enough brushes. I brought brushes to let the students-

Mary: We demonstrated at Camp Protocol.

Marie: Oh, yeah. We were there, yeah.

Mary: [chuckles]

Marie: And then I went and- there was a Scarborough Art Guild. They wanted sumi-e demonstrations, so we went.

Mary: [And we seen everything?]

Marie: [nods] Yeah, seen it. So, I went there a couple of times. So, I've sort of cut back over the years, these were a long time ago. The only thing new that I did over the last, like, five years or so was Yee Hong[?]. Oh, I forgot about all that.

Mary: [laughs] You always went all over the place, I didn't go.

Marie: Yeah. Yeah.

Mary: [unclear]

Marie: Well, Hamilton wasn't bad. I get a little hour, over an hour to get there.

Mary: Oh, I couldn't- I couldn't drive all that way all by myself. Arthur sure wasn't alright to drive me all the way to Hamilton [laughs].

Natalie: When you think about sumi-e over the years and recent paintings you see in the group shows, do you kind of get a sense of where sumi-e might go in the future?

Mary: Did you notice that at the last group shows they [merged?] the painting as more of a sort of [beneficiary?]?

Marie: [nods] Oh, yeah.

Mary: A sort of way out.

Marie: Yeah. Now that one, it's funny, while I was babysitting the gallery, the sister of that artist came from Syracuse. And they didn't know that she had won the prize, so they were just so happy.

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: And so- But then that lady was taught by this Motoi Oi.

Mary: Oh.

Marie: That actual the founder of the American Society [Sumi-e Society of America].

Mary: [talking simultaneously] The founder of the American thing, yeah.

Marie: And he does that kind of thing to begin, sort of a [unclear]. So- so she actually- like that was the second prize of the- Because the cat was the first one, then it was that one, as far as the level.

Mary: And that was black and white.

Marie: Yeah. That was a small, little painting, I was surprised. So, I think as far as sumi-e, like, I think it's evolved to more Canadian based now. It's not that much- I think there's more Chinese influence in our society actually of the sumi-e artists. Basically, because there aren't that many Japanese artists. Like- as like over the years, say 30 years, I think you were one of the Japanese artists, and I think there was another lady that came from Japan. And then, well of course, when I had the Japanese group come in 2000. Then we had a lot of Japanese exposure there. But aside from that, they're all- pretty all Chinese artists, so, you know, [it's bound to?].

[01:35]

HY: So, you had a show, big show [into?] Japanese art group? That was 2000?

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Yeah.

HY: How did you organize-?

Marie: Well, at that time-

HY: [How did you know all those people?]

Marie: Well, at that time, I had come to do a Jewish lady's fundraising at the Center. So, they wanted somebody in sumi-e, so I was doing that. And then the consul there, [Shimani?], he came over and he said, oh, he has a friend that does this sort of thing. So, I says, "Oh," I says, "If he ever comes to visit, you know, Toronto, then let us know. We would like to have him for our workshop." So then, and that was the end of that. And then he comes around, and Consul General Hara did this [Nexus?] Japan, so they wanted all these Japanese cultural programs. So, then- then [Mr. Shimani?] said, "Well, there's this group from Japan that would like to come." So, then I sort of organized that. So, it was quite a big undertaking because they were a big group, 400. And they only had room for, say, a hundred paintings, I think. And so, we were going to give them 70, and us, like, 30. Well, I got a letter saying they wanted about 150. No, I- At the beginning, it was 200. And I had to write back and say, "You know, we don't have room for that." So, I had a hard time trying to pare it down. So, I think, as it turned out, 100 of their paintings and, I think, 30 of ours. And then they brought the other extra 50, and they wanted it exchanged, like-

Mary: [speaking simultaneously] So, they wanted to bring down 50 and hang up the new 50 over night?

Marie: [nods] New 50.

Mary: Because you only had 2 days.

HY: So, you did?

Marie: [nods] Yeah, so we did it, because I hired- there was a couple of young- you know, Japanese Canadian boys here working so I hired them to do it. Yeah, and then I arranged for them to have workshops. So, as it turned out, there were about four excellent teachers. Yeah, like, Saturday morning and afternoon, and Sunday morning and afternoon. And at that time, I got a lady to interpret what the artists were saying.

HY: How many artists came?

Marie: Came? 55.

HY: 55?

Marie: [nods]

Mary: And my brother-in-law interpreted, because he's born in Japan.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: He interpreted for a couple of ladies.

Marie: Yeah. Yeah.

Mary: And they gave him nice paintings [chuckles].

Marie: Yeah. Well, I couldn't get over how they would just whip it up and- [laughs].

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: You know, one is like Nan Kon- Koneisigi-

Mary: Okosan.

Marie: Yeah.

HY: Yeah. I think.

Mary: Okomoto?

HY: Yes. Okomoto [Mato?] she's very famous, active artist. She's published many paintings.

Marie: Yeah. Because the [unclear] said, like- so, we said we like the best [laughs]. I said to Mr. Saiko, that you know-

HY: My favorite comedian. Comedy. Japanese comedian.

Marie: Oh, yeah, comedian.

Mary: Yeah. There was another artist. She had her own block.

Marie: Yeah, well, she was from Akita.

HY: Yes, yes, yes. I know her-

Mary: Yes.

Marie: I can't think of her name right now but-

HY: She was very famous too.

Marie: And there was another one that he didn't do a workshop though. But-

Mary: He did a dragon?

Marie: No, that was another fella. Yeah.

Mary: He was mean [laughs].

HY: [laughs]

Marie: Yeah. Yeah. But then-

Mary: I asked him a question, he says, "I'm painting!" Oh gosh.

Marie: Yeah, well, you know, in Japan, with the Japanese artists. I mean there's some with assistants, making the ink, getting the water, and you know, like, all they do is pick up the brush and paint.

[All laugh]

HY: Yeah, I know some artists. [laughing]

Marie: Well, you know, like there's about two or three people always there helping with the news- like the paper, and put it down, you put all the things, and he just goes and- But I was busy, I didn't get to see too many of the demonstrations.

Mary: I only saw one.

Marie: Yeah.

HY: Have they, you know, do some kind of society?

Marie: Yeah, Japanese- Japan and Chinese Friendship society.

HY: Oh! Really?

Marie: Yeah. So, they had at that time over 400 members. In Japan.

HY: Ah, yes.

Marie: But they had, prior to that, they had a show in Ja- China. I think it's China. And they had a booklet.

[01:40]

Marie: But then- Yes, I was really pleased with that. That, I feel, is my one thing that I remember most about the Sumi-e. That I, you know, 'cause I felt that that was really a highlight.

HY: For the some of the- [Mrs. Karama?] are you- She had the workshop, I don't know when but she-

Marie: Oh!

Mary: Oh, yeah, she came out, yeah.

Marie: The one with the red book. Sumi-e book.

HY: Yes, yes, yes.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Yeah, she came about twice. Now, she used to come to Detroit every year, I think.

And so, I don't know how I got to know her but- so she came twice. Yeah. So, and then when we went to Japan in '86 with the Sumi-e group, we met that Yamada. You know the-

HY: Oh, it's Yamada Yokom?

Marie: Yeah, well I-

Mary: Yeah, in Tok- Tokyo.

Marie: Tokyo [nods].

HY: Yes, yes. Yeah.

Marie: Yeah, so he did a workshop for us- Was it two days, or?

HY: Nine- Nine- nine?

Marie: 1986.

HY: 1986, yeah.

Mary: NHK [Japan Broadcasting Corporation] came to televise it.

Marie: Yeah. So-

HY: He passed away too.

Mary: Oh, did he? Oh.

Marie: Oh, yeah, he must be, he was quite old then, so. And then we were in Kyoto. We had another artist do workshops.

Mary: He was so nervous [laughs].

Marie: Yeah. Well, he was late to begin with. And I guess he really felt bad. He just came walking in and he had an assistant, the assistant's making the ink. He doesn't say anything, you know, to us. He just sits down and starts painting. And, yeah, so it was funny. And then after he finished the painting, then he started talking. But I think he was quite embarrassed that he was late.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Yeah. So, I think he acknowledged Ruth Yamada but that was all. But he didn't say he was late or why he was late [laughs].

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: But he just got down to visit and started painting.

Mary: Well, Sam, I remember, broke the ice by making a comment.

Marie: Yeah, he said something about, yeah.

Mary: And then he sort of thawed out a bit.

[Mary, HY, Natalie laugh]

Marie: Yeah, because in those days, like, if you're interested, like, Sam Yamada, Ruth's husband, he would watch Japanese paintings, like artists. Because on that particular trip, we met two artists in China, too. So, it was a very good tour that we had. 'Cause in Hong Kong, and then we went into mainland China, and found that was still, like there was still the Red Guards [chuckles]-

HY: Was that the same time? Or different time?

Marie: No, same time.

Mary: Same time.

HY: Same time. Same time, Japan and China, same time?

Mary: China first and then went up to Japan.

HY: How many people?

Mary: Bus- busload.

Marie: 33 people

HY: Oh, 33 people.

Marie: [nods]

HY: And how long was that?

Marie: That must have been over, close to three weeks. 'Cause we were in China for about- Not a week, but say, by the time we went through [half of the time?]

Mary: Yeah, we went to Hong Kong, and then we went to Macau, and through Macau we went through mainland China.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: And I go, "Oh, my God we're gonna have lunch with all these ducks and pigs I see out by the roadside" [laughs].

Marie: Yeah, like, it was really quite, I would say primitive, in those days, yeah because- And then we come into this little town, and there's this marbling glass hotel-like thing, you know.

Mary: It was better than the Westin Hotel down by the lake.

Marie: But I don't think they're for anything becau- And then this artist came, and his paintings were really, really cheap. But then they were all American. Like I bought a painting for five dollars. Not- not for, you know, framing or anything. And I think scrolls were only about 20 dollars. And I think he was happy that day because-

Mary: Oh, more than happy [laughs]!

Marie: [chuckles] Because, you know, we're all of us, at 30 some odd people, we're all buying things. So, first time, I think, that he was- But I think he was nervous too. Well, you know, Sumi-e Artists of Canada, that's quite an impressive name.

[All laugh]

Marie: So, yeah, and that one too I don't know if they were televising that or not. But yeah, it was funny how we had our lunch there. And, you know, the food was excellent.

Mary: We had our own and it was all beautiful lake and [unclear]. It was really nice. Sidney loved it [laughs].

[01:45]

MI?: So, did I [laughs].

Marie: Yeah, so-

Mary: And then while we- While I was waiting for the artist to sign my painting, my husband had gone downstairs to see what else there was. And he says, "Hey, there's a store down there selling all sorts of brushes and things."

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: So, I didn't get much time to buy anything, but I bought some the- You know the sticks, the things that you have to carve, you know. And-

Marie: What, the paper weights, the paper weights?

Mary: Oh, no, the marble things that you carve [motions with hand].

Marie: Oh, the seal, seal. Yeah, well, you know, there was such a lineup, I barely got my eye on anything like that. Like, you know, the bus tours, like, you know, after when the bus decides to go, it's like you have to be ready to get on that bus.

Mary: "Okay, now we're going."

Marie: Yeah.

[Both laugh]

Marie: Yeah. Well, that was an excellent trip 'cause that was my first trip to Japan. Yeah, so I really enjoyed that.

Mary: We even went to Island of Sado.

HY: Oh, really?

Mary: Yeah. We went north up to-

Marie: Akita.

HY: Akita.

Mary: What was that [draws circle in air]?

Marie: I don't know. And then we went over to the Japan seaside. And then we went to Niigata and from there we went to Sado.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: We came back. Then I think it was, what, Kanazawa, or?

HY: Kanazawa.

Marie: Yeah, where there's the stone-

Mary: And we went to a paper-making place. We took a route up the mountain-

Marie: Because there-

HY: Near-

Marie: We were supposed to go see the other- What was that place called? It's in a painting. Like the sunset and the- It's supposed to be one of the beautiful spots in Japan-

HY: Oh, Ta-mi-na-ra?

Marie: Oh, I don't know, somewhere by the sea, anyways.

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: But they said if it was golden week, it would packed with people. So, then they decided to take us to a paper-making place. So, it was on our way to Kyoto. So, it's in the woods there, somewhere from Kanazawa to Kyoto. But it was interesting on how they make paper.

Mary: Yeah. Very interesting.

HY: Oh, yeah, they just squeeze- squeeze-

Mary: Yeah, something- something like that.

HY: Famous papermaking.

Marie: [nods] Could be.

Mary: Lots of buses there, we weren't the only people visiting.

HY: Madate, or?

Marie: Yeah, that sounds- that name sounds familiar.

Mary: And they had- they put paper into this [draws square in air] pack and then they put ink on it [imitates sprinkling something] and then they swirl it around a bit, and it makes a beautiful pattern. And then-

Marie: Yeah. So, we were all able to do that.

Mary: Do that. And they'd say bring it up, and when you're in the store it'll dry out. So, we went and rushed to buy at the store.

Marie: Yeah, we went to some [unclear]. So, as I say, it was a ve- excellent trip that we went. It was the year that Princess Diana and Prince Charles were in Japan. And they were in Kyoto at the same time as us.

[someone coughs off camera]

HY: Oh.

Mary: Yeah, we were in the older Miyako Hotel.

Marie: And they came.

HY: Oh, did they?

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: So, we saw, but they say, "No pictures!" You couldn't bring a camera out. But yeah, we were in a smaller area like this in the foyer so, it was-

Mary: They gave me a Japanese flag [laughs] I wanted a Canadian one.

Marie: Yea, so, and then different shrines that we were going to. They were just coming, or they just left, or something, you know. And only the people in the hotel could see. But then our mother-in-law's niece lived in Kyoto. So, we got her to come in. So, there she was able to see- because everybody was looking at Diana, never mind Prince Charles.

Mary: Oh, yeah. Yeah [laughs].

Marie: So, actually, like with Sumi-e, I would say it has enriched my life very much, I would think. You know, so I'm glad that I took it up at the time. Yet, I see- I think I see things differently. Like, having learned Sumi-e.

HY: And do you know as an artist, you're always talking about the trained artist, like some artist- some sumi-e artist in Ottawa like [Mr. Chipichi?] or Mrs. Koyama, or do you know any art- artist that do sumi-e in Vancouver, or Montreal, or Winnipeg-?

[01:50]

Marie: Well, I think we had a member in Vancouver somewhere at when, you know, we first started the sumi-e. Now whether she took lessons here or- But then, so that's why I said, "At least it legitimizes our name in Canada, instead of just in Ontario" [laughs].

Mary: Well, one of our members moved out there [points].

Marie: Yeah. And then- Like, yeah Jean Lou.

Mary: [nods] Jean.

Marie: Yeah, so I think-

HY: Jean Lou?

Marie: Lou.

HY: Yes, [unclear]

Marie: Yeah, and she took lessons from Ruth. And after she graduated, got a seal, she started a sumi-e group out in west end Toronto. Etobicoke, around there. So, a lot of our members came from there. They were like the new- Because up until then, it was all of Ruth's graduates. And then, now we see whoever's interested in sumi-e become members. But they can't necessarily exhibit. But yeah, I think a lot of our members now sold with

Jean, there were quite a few people that came in. So, in a matter of about five years, we got over a hundred members. And that's when in about four years- [starts counting off names with fingers] Let's see there was [mumbling].

Mary: Yeah, she-

Marie: Yeah, somewhere about the fourth- fifth year we changed it to Sumi-e Artists. Instead of the American Society. But then we keep, like, a sister organization so that we keep in touch. And we send our newsletter.

Mary: We have a membership. Corporate membership.

Marie: Yeah, corporate, yeah, with them. So, that's why, like this would be- this past year was our second joint show. Because back in 1996, we had a joint show.

HY: I think the first show was in downtown-

Mary: Yes, the art gallery.

HY: Yes, the [unclear] building, Bay and-

Marie: Wellesley.

HY: Wellesley. Yes. Yes. I remember that.

Marie: Were you in the membership?

HY: At some time wasn't-

Marie: You weren't a member in the organization?

HY: A newspaper-

Mary: Oh.

HY: And-

Marie: Yeah, like the [unclear], or the Continental.

Mary: Yeah, at that time, because it was with a government building, we had to have the invitations and the work in English and French. And luckily, there was a-

Marie: [laughs]

Mary: One of our members, she was French. And she did all the translation for us.

Marie: She was married to a Japanese businessman, you know. So, we were lucky because she did all- [laughs]. So, we've been quite lucky in our ways.

HY: What year was that?

Marie: 1996.

HY: '96.

Marie: Yeah. So, it's surprising, and I think, you know, as far as the future of the Sumi-e Artists, like, we're having a hard time getting presidents and our treasurers retired, but I think somebody will step up, hopefully. Because, I say, like I- I've been president twice, I've been the treasurer, I've been the membership, I've been the professional development-

Mary: [chuckles]

Marie: So, I don't want to go through it again.

[All laugh]

HY: You need a new-?

Marie: New blood.

Mary: Yeah, the younger ones, you know.

Marie: Mm-hm. But basically, like, Natalie here is young. But most are, say, just ready to retire or because so often people say to me, “Oh, when I retire, I’m going to take it up.” I say, “Oh no, you should start before” [chuckles].

[Mary and HY chuckle]

Marie: Do you know of any Japanese artists still here?

HY: Not- I don’t know, just only one artist doing Japanese- style painting. And-

Mary: Oh, there’s illustrators here. There used to be when I was in the business.

HY: Oh, there’s many, yes-

Mary: Like the books, you know.

Marie: [coughs]

HY: Like, [Ascarawabe?], or [Tom Yo-ri-to?] But they are not like sumi-e artists.

[01:55]

Mary: No, no, no, they’re illustrators.

HY: Many- No, photographer or commercial artists, many Japanese, from Japan.

Marie: Oh, from Japan.

HY: Very good artists.

Marie: Yeah, that sumi-e doesn’t seem to be that popular, say, in Japan. And yet, as I say, I was surprised when there were so many people like that in 2000. But I don’t see anybody coming from Japan, immigrating-

HY: No [laughs].

Marie: -yeah, immigrating to Canada. But there’s this fella now, he’s in Vancouver. He did a calendar of sumi-e art. What was his name?

PW: Yeah, he lives in Victoria.

Marie: Oh, Victoria.

HY: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes.

Mary: He’s Japanese.

HY: Yes.

[unknown person off camera]: Sansei.

HY: Sansei. Yes. Yes. Sansei. He does Judo.

PW: Yeah, he was in Japan for a long time, and he picked up his cultural art thing.

Marie: Yeah. So-

PW: He was in a showroom, you know.

Marie: Yeah, and yeah so- a shodo member was, like, he was selling calendars. So, he wondered if the shodo group or the sumi-e group would be interested in buying and selling them.

HY: Yeah, I have that calendar-

Marie: Did you buy it?

HY: Yes, yes-

Marie: Yeah, well-

HY: He was in Hamilton last year.

Marie: Yeah, that's right.

PW: Yeah, in Hamilton.

Marie: Yeah, he's from Hamilton, I think. Well, he has relatives in Hamilton. Yeah, so, yeah Richard gave me one, you know. But yeah so, I don't see too many. So, I say I think eventually, ours would turn into more Chinese style. But then there's Chinese Lingnan- it's more like Japanese painting.

HY: Yeah, they get some influence-

Marie: Yeah, from Japan.

HY: -from Japan.

Marie: So, that- that's where I- That's why I like the Lingnan style, you know, in the Chinese. So, Natalie, we're open for different positions in the Sumi-e Artists [laughs].

[All laugh]

Natalie: I caught on to that.

[All laugh]

Marie: Yeah. But it's satisfying to know that it's still going strong.

HY: Yes, Sumi-e in Japan, the 600- more than 600-year history-

Marie: Oh yeah, that's right. Mm-hm.

HY: So, you know, we got to keep continuing in Canada too.

Marie: Yes. Yeah.

Mary: Yeah, we were so glad that you came over when we retired [laughs].

HY: [laughs]

Marie: Yeah. Because was it when I had cancer when we retired, or what was it? Or last year?

Mary: Well, it was that, and I was getting too old.

Marie: Yeah. So, when I got cancer, I said, "Well, I think this is it for me." So, that's seven years already.

HY: And also new immigrant, they are, sort of, getting old. Retired. They are retired-

Marie: Yeah, so-

HY: So, they want to study.

Marie: Yeah.

HY: Start to study.

Marie: Yeah, that's right, there's quite a few Japanese-

HY: Japanese student recently.

Marie: Oh, recently now too, eh?

HY: Yeah, in these three to five years.

Marie: Oh. Yeah, so that's nice.

Mary: Well, there's a lot of Japanese mothers that go into bata [chuckles].

Marie: Yeah. But they're young.

Mary: They're young, so they're too busy to learn things like sumi-e.

Marie: Yeah. Yeah. And yet, I say, like, my youngest then, [Laurie?] was only three when I started. So, I must've been in my thirties [laughs].

Mary: Yeah, well, I started taking lessons because my daughter was born.

HY: Oh, so when you-?

Mary: In '67.

HY: Oh.

Mary: You know, I got bored of staying at home [laughs]. So, Marie says, "Let's go."

HY: So, when you start, 20 something?

Mary: Me? Oh, I was in my thirties.

HY: Thirties.

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Yeah, cause [Laurie?] was born when I was 30, so about 33 when I [unclear].

Mary: Right, you were 33 and I was 34 then [laughs].

Marie: [laughs] Yeah, so, it was a lot-

HY: It's good a thing to start [study a little?], you know.

Mary: But I didn't teach for a long time because Mrs. Yamada kept saying, "Well, why don't you- why don't you consider teaching?" I said, "Mrs. Yamada, I don't have time!" I got two kids and a job and, you know, a house to look after, a husband to look after.

[02:00]

Mary: Well, he was- he looks after himself [laughs]. Yeah, it was only when she was retiring then I said, "Okay." Imagine how many years we've been doing this [laughs].

Marie: Yeah, so '67 till now. We must've stopped about 2003 or '04? That's a long a time. It's longer than what Mrs. Yamada- like, she was coming three days a week, you know. But I think she retired when she was about 60 or 65. And here we are at 70.

Mary: Well, she had health problems.

Marie: Yeah, yeah, well she had that heart problem too. Yeah, but it surprised me, she had three children to raise when she was coming here. Like in the '60s, they would be quite young then. I'm glad she did.

[All chuckles]

Mary: Or we wouldn't be talking to you, I guess.

Marie: No, we wouldn't have had this opportunity. So, when they said, do a eulogy, I said yeah, for her, when she passed away. You have any other questions, or?

Mary: Oh, I was gonna say I had a friend at McClain-Hunter, and she became one of my very good friends. She took up sumi-e with me, and her husband brought her up all the time.

Marie: Oh, Marienne. Oh, yes, she was good.

Mary: She just loved it. She was here by the time of- Who graduated with me? Diane, maybe?

Marie: Takasaki? Oh no, Diane Jackson.

Mary: No, Diane [unclear]... Diane [O-bo-a?] and George Yamada [unclear].

HY: And also, Kazuo Hamazaki, he was studying Sumi-e in the beginning, but he never joined Sumi-e society.

Marie: No, no, no. Well, because basically, like, Kaz, was more watercolors because he never used rice paper. Like he always painted on watercolor paper. But sumi-e style, you know. But then, you know, I used to ask him to come for workshops about two or three times, I think.

HY: He started before you, sumi-e?

Marie: Well, he and Ruth, they all started with-

Mary: They all started at the same time.

HY: Oh, oh, I see, same time, I see.

Marie: But then he started to take up correspondence course with this Japanese artist. And-

Mary: He got his sales through the-

HY: From Japan, I see.

Marie: Japan.

Mary: Well, Mrs. Yamada she- she lived in Japan for a while.

Marie: Yeah, she lived in Japan for about six months.

HY: Six? Oh.

Marie: I think, I don't know exactly the time. But I know she stayed there- Like I'm sure she said six months- six months, but I don't know, like these days I wouldn't. But, yeah, that's where she had- took lessons with this [Kamada?].

Mary: She- she got her sales through there?

Marie: Yeah. But I don't know why [unclear]

HY: And also, just one artist, Cassandra, she teachers [hari-ba-tu?]

Marie: Yeah. She took lessons from Ruth.

HY: Oh, from Ruth too. Oh, I see.

Marie: I don't know if she ever got a seal, though. Like she's quite the artist, so that- I think she started to teach. And I think she became a member-

Mary: Not too long ago.

Marie: Not too long ago, because I think she was part of our show. Our 25th anniversary.

But she started teaching Sumi-e, oh, as I say, after she- I don't think she ever got a seal.

From- at that time when she was teaching. Yeah, so the ones like Jean Lou, Fumi Toyota, they're all from the West End. And then there was another, Bob Kadoguchi's sister, forgot what her last- her first name was.

[02:05]

Marie: Tabata. So, she was teaching in Whitby.

HY: What?

Marie: Whitby. Do you know if she's alive? It's awful to ask about somebody, but- It's Bob's sister. What was her first name, I don't remember. Yeah, but she was teaching out [points] in that area.

Mary: She was- Her last name was [Kabuchi?].

Marie: Yeah. [Kabuchi?], yeah.

Mary: Now, who's sister was she?

Marie: Bob Kadoguchi's sister, yeah.

Mary: You'd have to ask Mrs.-

Marie: But she- Like, I haven't seen her in years. And I haven't heard of her being in any art shows, so I don't know what's happened to her.

Mary: Yeah, she was a very good artist. When we were graduating, she was painting.

Marie: Yeah, she was in all the different shows. Yeah, like, Kaz, he, like, like he- I don't think he ever really did [unclear] but basically, he was always in watercolor.

Mary: In the beginning, he showed us some samples. They looked like Sumi-e.

HY: Yeah, downstairs there his paintings are on exhibition right now. Yeah, in the beginning he studied traditional Japanese sumi-e. But later on, he combined to watercolor, but technically is very much sumi-e-

Marie: [nods] Sumi-e style, yeah.

HY: -But paint on watercolor paper-

Mary: [nods] Watercolor.

HY: -with watercolor.

Mary: Yeah, I went to his house and my husband walked by his things, and he had the paper all cut up, and the frames and mats all cut up to a certain size. So, when we said we wanted a painting, he had a whole pile of them. He'd- he'd get it all framed before we left.

Marie: Oh [chuckles]! Oh, yeah, the metal frames.

Mary: Yeah, yeah.

Marie: And they're all the same size.

HY: Yes.

Mary: But he turned them this way or this way.

HY: And do you have- heard of Terry Adachi?

Marie: Terry Adachi took lessons from Kaz.

HY: Oh, he did?

Marie: Yeah, so he didn't take lessons from Ruth.

HY: Oh, I see.

Marie: Yeah. And, well, he's been a member almost from the beginning.

Mary: I was a member from the second meeting [laughs].

Marie: Second meeting, yeah. Yeah, we had different meetings and then-

Mary: No, when you first got together, I wasn't there.

Marie: [redacted sentence] Then my presidency, which was a year and a half.

HY: And also, Ann Nakagawa-

Marie: Yeah, Ann Nakagawa was teaching out in-

Mary: Etobicoke.

Marie: -Etobicoke. But she had teaching lessons from Jean Lou.

HY: Oh! Jean Lou?

Marie: Yeah. Yeah, and so there's quite a few, so there's Sumi Takashima.

HY: Mm-hm. From Jean?

Marie [nods] Jean Lou. So, once it became for sumi-e artists and these ladies sort of graduated, they became members of the Sumi-e Artists. So, after we hit a hundred members, we were pretty well about constant hundred, hundred ten, you know, never under a hundred. [points to MI] But you brought some, quite a few this year.

HY: Yes.

[Mary and Marie chuckles]

PW: Where did Peter Ito get this?

Marie: From Ann Ruth.

Maru: Ruth.

Marie: And then he was one of the earl- the first classes, I think. Because I remember him and a few ladies getting their seal when I think he first joined. I remember that ceremony.

HY: Peter used to [unclear]

Mary: [nods] Yeah.

Marie: Yeah.

Mary: [unclear]

HY: Oh, really?

Mary: Yeah.

Marie: Yeah, he's an OCA [Ontario College of Art] graduate. And- and he has his own distinctive style.

HY: Yes.

Marie: I like his style.

HY: Like dynamic.

Marie: [nods] Yeah. Yeah.

HY: He paints very quick [chuckles].

[02:10]

Marie: And Terry, I guess, Terry, he was- I think he really loved to paint. He must've been painting every day, you know.

Mary: He worked commercially for Brendon's.

Marie: [nods] Yeah, he was a commercial artist.

Mary: Yeah, he used to- he used to do-

HY: Commercial artist.

Mary: He used to do the Christmas card all the time.

Marie: His daughter is a commercial artist too, but she does with computers. But he would always have five paintings.

Mary: Yeah, terrific paintings. [chuckles] I'm sweating to get one done.

Marie: Yeah. So, but he used to come and demonstrate, so you know when [Jim Ura?] would ask to see if he had- I'd ask Peter and Terry, they were always willing to and demonstrate.

And Terry now, he went to out in- I don't know whether it was Belleville or somewhere out in the east.

Mary: Oh, yeah.

Marie: I remember they phoned me, and I said, "No, I couldn't go." So, I-

Mary: What's that town? Is Belleville the one that's near the border or something?

PW: No, Belleville is out in the east-

Mary: Is it past the-?

PW: It's almost on the same Lawrence River sort of thing.

HY: Yeah, is it north of Kingston?

PW: Yeah, near Kingston. It's near the town lines.

Mary: Oh, oh. Well, that's- that's where Peter and Terry went to teach summer sessions.

Marie: [nods] Yeah.

Mary: Yeah.

PW: It'd just be a sketch camp, or something.

Marie: Mm-hm. Camp was done in one week or two-week sessions.

Mary: Yeah, [Kudo?] used to go up there.

Marie: Yeah. And then, yeah well, Terry, he like, you know, he would always come and demonstrate, and then he would do these painting kind of thing, you know, when you put's in with the- Like he'd almost finish the painting, but not good enough to frame it as far as I was concerned. And I felt kinda guilty, like we used to sell these demonstrations, one for ten dollars. And I think, well but then no signature [laughs].

[All laugh]

Mary: What made you paint for [unclear]?

Marie: What do you mean?

Mary: On University Avenue. I don't know what it was that they had, but Terry, and Peter, and I were up there.

Marie: Yeah. Well, you know, like Jim Mura used to be sort of like a community liaison to call. He would arrange for the dancers, and some [90?] martial arts, and cultural programs, so we always call him.

Mary: We even painted at city hall.

Marie: Oh, yeah! Yeah, that's right. I forgot about that one. It was a CMC thing?

Mary: [shakes head] I don't know.

Marie: I think it was. [So, with every brush we'd go travel?]

[All laugh]

PW: You guys always demonstrated at the functions?

Marie: What?

PW: At the, you know, different Centre functions.

Marie: Oh, yeah, the Centre functions. Oh, yeah, my close caravan days. Nine days. And then most of it was from five, I think it was. Or somewhere around there, till the 11th. Except the weekends, then I had to get somebody from 11 o' clock or 12 o' clock up til 9, I guess we used to close at 9. Yeah, so we- we loved it. And I think we had shows at the Toronto Public

Library at Fairview. Yeah, and then we had another show at the Markham Theatre. So, all these different places they'd have original art for sale. We'd just give them a commission. At the time, I think there was someone looking for different galleries. Like, we'd have our annual show here at the Cultural Centre, but then we'd have another show like maybe somewhere else.

Marie: [nods] Yeah. Our first show actually was in the springtime.

HY: Spring?

Marie: Like, in April or something for our first show.

HY: Oh.

Marie: And then after that, it's always been the fall.

Mary: Did we have a show once in the basement of the old Centre?

[02:15]

Marie: There was something there, I can't remember what it was.

HY: Oh, you had the show at OAC.

Marie: Oh, yeah.

Mary: Oh, yeah.

Marie: [nods] At Toronto Gardens, right. Yeah, we used to have one every year while they used to have Touch of Japan.

HY: Oh, Touch of Japan.

Marie: So, it was always at OAC. So, we used to pin the paintings in the room that they had the [bonsai?]. And I thought it was very effective. Yeah, OAC, and then yeah so, we've [unclear]

Mary: [laughs] [unclear]

Marie: Yeah, we count them now when you think about it [chuckles]. But then we had the CN Tower, and up until then I didn't really want to go up on the CN Tower, sort of made me nervous, you know.

Mary: [chuckles]

Marie: But we went up there. And I don't know who the collector was, it was somebody from Japan. And I did a painting, and this man was there with a young boy, you know. He said, he looks at the [unclear], "My son can do that!" [laughs].

Mary: [laughs]

Marie: Yeah, there were beautiful calligraphy. They all came from Japan.

Mary: They used to keep what she had as paintings too.

Marie: Well, he joined our show about two shows, I think. Yeah, he was a map - cartographer or something?

Mary: Yeah, like when he first came to Ottawa, he was a cartographer. You know those- He made maps with lines on it, and it shows the level and the height. That's what he was.

PW: It's called cartography.

Marie: Cartography.

PW: He's a cartographer.

Marie: Yeah, and then he took up painting. And then he was with the-

HY: Ikebana?

Marie: Ikebana. But I think it's either Ohio or-

Mary: He used to do huge flower arrangements for the Embassy of Japan. And they had galleries.

Marie: So, he did a workshop for us. That must've been in the early years. And he bought quite a few paintings for our show

Mary: You bought one, didn't you?

Marie: I bought one, yeah.

HY: Do you have any contact with Mrs. Kodama?

Marie: Yeah, we've had the workshops.

Mary: I think we've went up there.

Marie: [nods] Once, yeah. And she does calligraphy as well as Sumi-e. She's been there from the 70s. So, I think she- Like, you know Roslyn? Levin?

HY: Oh Roslyn?

Marie: Well, she took lessons from Mrs. Kodama.

HY: Oh! Really? Those three took- Oh, really?

Marie: [nods] Yeah.

Mary: That's- that's where she gets her style.

HY: [unclear] Calligraphy.

Marie: [nods] Yeah. But I know that Mrs. Kodama- I don't know if she does it, but she does take student's paintings to Japan and shows them there. She's made some sort of arrangement. I guess the embassy there, maybe she has an in, I don't know.

HY: So, those three used to live in Ottawa.

Marie: I guess so, yeah.

PW: It's almost three hours now.

[Marie and Mary check their watches]

[HY and Natalie laugh]

Marie: Oh yeah, four o' clock.

Mary: [unclear]

Marie: No, I don't think so.

PW: No, I'll take you.

Marie: [nods] Oh, are you?

Mary: What?

Marie: Yeah, Peter says he'll take us home.

[End Interview]